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State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker



TO: **W-2 Agencies
Training Staff**

FROM: Margaret McMahon, Director
Bureau of Working Families
Division of Family and Economic Security
Department of Children and Families

BWF OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 16-06 (Amended)

DATE: 3/25/2016-6/13/2016

W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other EP	<input type="checkbox"/> *

SUBJECT: CARES Enhancement to Support Wisconsin Works Temporary Absence Policy

CROSS REFERENCE: [W-2 Manual, 2.8.2 Temporary Absence of a Child](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 26, 2016

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to communicate an enhancement to the CARES system that will automate the Wisconsin Works (W-2) temporary absence of a child policy.

BACKGROUND

[W-2 Manual Section 2.8.2](#) requires that W-2 eligibility allow for instances of a child being temporarily absent from the home. CARES does not support the temporary absence policy for W-2 and requires a FEP to use a workaround to continue to code the child as living in the home to keep the W-2 case open. This workaround did not support households that also received FoodShare, which resulted in incorrect FoodShare allocations for those households. Effective March 26, 2016, CWW will allow children in an open W-2 case to be temporarily absent without having a negative impact on other programs.

POLICY

There are no W-2 policy changes associated with this memo.

CARES CHANGES

Current Demographics Page

The **Current Demographics** page will have a new section at the bottom of the page titled **W-2 Temporary Absence Information**. A FEP will only be able to edit this section if the following are true.

1. The worker signed onto CARES is a FEP or a FEP Supervisor;
2. The absent child is less than 19 years old; and
3. The absent child is not the primary person.

The question, **Is this Child Temporarily Absent from the home?**, will default to 'NO' when a new request for W-2 is made or when adding a child to an existing W-2 case who is under the age of 19. When the question is answered with a 'NO' then the three additional fields in the section will be blank and not updateable.

If the FEP changes the 'NO' to 'YES', then the **Temporary Absence Verification**, **Absence Begin Date** and the **Expected Return Date** fields are required. This change also forces CARES to override the child's **Living Arrangement Type** on the **Current Demographics** page when the type is anything other than Independent (Home, APT/TRLR) for the purpose of determining eligibility for the child.

➤ **NOTE:** ~~If any eligible child remains in the home, do not change to 'YES' nor enter data for the temporarily absent child. This workaround is no longer necessary. Effective June 25, 2016, FEPs should change 'NO' to 'YES' and enter data for the temporarily absent child.~~

The **Absence Begin Date** cannot be prior to the **W-2 Request Date** shown on the **W-2 Request page**, and the **Expected Return Date** must be today's date or greater, but no more than six months from the **Absence Begin Date**.

Once a child is identified as temporarily absent from the home, CWW will prohibit that child from being deleted from the case until the temporary absence indicator is switched back to 'NO'.

- **REMINDER:** When the FEP confirms W-2 eligibility on a combined case that has eligibility unconfirmed for any other program(s), the FEP must notify the Income Maintenance (IM)/Child Care (CC) worker to confirm eligibility for the other program(s). Similarly when the IM/CC worker confirms eligibility on a case with eligibility unconfirmed for the W-2 program, the IM/CC worker must notify the FEP to confirm eligibility for the W-2 program. This notification must be via email, fax, or phone contact to ensure timely processing of W-2, CC and IM cases. Whenever a FEP or IM/CC worker makes a change in a case, the worker must enter a case comment documenting the specific change that was made.

CARES will generate a new alert (519 - *W-2 ABSENT CHILD DUE TO RETURN*) to the FEP if a child is temporarily absent from a household and the expected return date is within one month of the Temporary Absence **Expected Date of Return**.

At adverse action, CARES will end eligibility for any case with a child who has been temporarily absent for longer than six months.

Living Arrangement Information			
Effective Period			
Begin Month:	06 / 2015	Last Updated: 06/04/2015	
Living Arrangements			
Living Arrangement Type:	01 - INDEPENDENT (HOME/APT)	Verification:	NQ - NOT QUESTIONABLE
Living Arrangement Date:	MM / DD / YYYY		
Minor Parent Living Arrangement:			
Child Out of Home Details			
Is this a child living outside this home and in Foster Care or court-ordered Kinship Care?		No	
Are the parents / caretakers cooperating to re-unite with this child?		Verification:	
Tax Dependent / Tax Co-Filer Out of Home Details			
Is this individual a tax dependent or tax co-filer living outside of the household?		No	
W-2 Temporary Absence Information			
Is this Child Temporarily Absent from the home?:		Temporary Absence Verification:	
Absence Begin Date:		Expected Return Date:	
Enter New Begin Month: MM YYYY			
Individual Updated on or before			
JEFF TARGET 36M PP			
Add Case Comment			
Cancel Previous Next			

CASE SUMMARY PDF

Information for any temporarily absent children will be included on the Case Summary.

Basic Information

Person	Gender	Language	County or Tribe
CUSTODIAL PARENT	FEMALE	ENGLISH	MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Where You Live		Mailing Address	
PO BOX 411 W3236 WOLF RIVER DRIVE KESHENA, WI 54137			
Person	Gender	Marital Status	Language
CHILD CUSTODIAL Age: 6	MALE	SINGLE-NEVER MARRIED	ENGLISH
Programs Requested			
W-2			
SSN Application Date	SSN Cooperation	US Citizen	
	Yes	Yes	
Resident of WI?	Intends to reside in WI?	Migrant Farm Worker	
Yes	Yes	No	
Race and Ethnicity	Special Needs Child	Where does he/she live?	
		INDEPENDENT (HOME/APT/TRLR)	
Temporarily Absent (W-2)	Absence Begin Date	Expected Date of Return	
Yes	01/15/2016	04/30/2016	

Verification Checklist

The Verification Checklist will be enhanced to include examples of verification needed when a W-2 case is pending due to a reported temporary absence of a child.



Proof Needed

This section lists items that we need proof of by the due date listed below. Contact us right away if you have questions or problems getting the proof and we will help you.

What?	Who?	Examples*	Program(s)	Due Date
Child Temporary Absence	DAU	Court Order, Doctor's Statement, Other Acceptable Written Statement	W-2	Feb. 12, 2016
<i>*If you do not have any of the examples of proof listed, there are other things you can use. For a complete list of examples, go online to dhs.wi.gov/em/customerhelp or contact us.</i>				

CONVERSION

On March 26, 2016, all W-2 cases open or pending will have the new Temporarily Absent Child field defaulted to 'NO' for all children in the household under 19 years old.

TRAINING

The BWF Training Section is incorporating the changes described in this memo in the following trainings:

- New Worker Training – Application Entry;
- CWW Application Entry Desk Aid; and
- Practical Applications in CWW.

AGENCY ACTION

W-2 agencies must familiarize staff with these changes and update any relevant local agency procedures.

CONTACTS

For W-2 Policy Questions in the Balance of State: Bureau of Regional Operations, W-2 Regional Coordinators

For W-2 Policy Questions in Milwaukee: Milwaukee Operations Section Regional Administrators

For W-2 CARES Processing Questions: W-2 Help Desk

DCF/DFES/BWF/JK